

Idaho BLM In Action

March 2010 Edition



Fifth grade students from Shoshone Elementary School explore Craters of the Moon National Monument



Youth Corps Crew Chief Takes Pride in Jump Creek Canyon

Andrew Miller has always enjoyed Jump Creek. Growing up in Homedale, Idaho, he visited the spot to hike and swim with friends and family. "This place has been a favorite spot since childhood," he said.

This past fall, Miller was proud to have been part of a project to refurbish the trails and visitor facilities at Jump Creek. "It bothered me to see how people left things behind for others to clean up. I value the opportunity to be a part of repairing this really special place. Now when I visit, I feel such a sense of ownership knowing that I was a member of a crew that cleaned up this area for future generations to enjoy."

As a member of the Idaho Youth Corps (IYC), Miller was chief of a crew hired by the Bureau of Land Management to rehabilitate the popular recreation site southwest of Marsing. The IYC was established in 2008 by the Idaho Department of Labor on the model of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps.

The IYC crew constructed a new spur on the Falls Overlook Trail and installed water check dams along the Goat Trail. They also built the new Overlook Cutoff Trail to supplement the existing Falls Overlook Trail and further minimize erosion and vegetation loss by encouraging hikers to refrain from cutting across the slope. Waterbars were installed on the cutoff and native vegetation reseeded alongside the trail.

"Since the beginning of IYC in 2008, the organization has employed Idaho youth identified

IYC crew rehabilitates trail



as 'at-risk' in these types of community-based natural resource jobs," said IYC State Coordinator Ben Phillips.

Miller's love of the outdoors and interest in resource management led him to pursue a degree in Conservation Social Sciences from the University of Idaho. Upon Miller's graduation in May 2008, he became involved with the Idaho Youth Corps (IYC) and was a member of the first crew.

The work Miller has done with the IYC exposed him to government procedure and practices that he may not have received without the partnership between IYC and the BLM. The experience complemented Miller's interest in the field of natural resources and helped encourage his interest in pursuing a career with the Federal government. "This experience has been a great networking opportunity to learn more about the BLM and has gotten me excited about seeking future opportunities with the BLM," he said. "I hope to be able to continue my work with the IYC, while keeping in touch with my

Jump Creek Overview



BLM contacts."

BLM Boise District operations manager Jim Johansen said, "BLM managers who have utilized the IYC get the satisfaction of seeing their projects completed and the reward of working with young adults. Some of these projects may not have been possible without the assistance of the IYC."

Phillips notes the IYC's growth in just two years. "In 2008, the IYC employed about six youth crew members in natural resource projects. That grew to about 250 in 2009." With additional funding, he says the program could employ not only 'at-risk' youth but any young person across Idaho who is interested in community-based service.

The Idaho Youth Corps (IYC) is a project of the Idaho Department of Labor established to harness and shape the energy, idealism and work ethic of Idaho youth through the completion of meaningful work projects that enhance communities and natural resources.

Boise State Engineering Student Valuable Asset to Bureau of Land Management

BLM Boise District Engineering Technician Heath Perrine supervised a project to replace the cupola of the metal cabana at Bonneville Point, located about 10 miles east of Boise. The cabana houses interpretive information about the site and needed repair after vandalism.

Perrine was hired by the BLM as a Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) student in fall 2009 after working for three summers as a wild land firefighter for the U.S. Forest Service.

As a STEP participant, Perrine works 20-30 hours per week at the BLM and attends classes at Boise State University. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering.

The STEP is one of two options in the BLM's Student Educational Employment Program, which also includes the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

The two programs allow students the opportunity to apply skills acquired in the classroom to professional work experience for a competitive salary. Both programs present flexibility to schedule work around classes and eligibility to take advantage of benefits offered to permanent employees.

Students in the SCEP are eligible for tuition assistance and non-competitive conversion into a permanent position in the organization upon graduation.

Upon graduating in May 2010, Perrine hopes to pursue a career with the Federal government.

"The STEP has given me a challenging and rewarding experience that I hope to apply to a future path into the government," he said. "I encourage others interested in government positions to stay alert to opportunities in your field and pursue your passions. It's also important to have a love of the outdoors and public lands."

BLM Boise District Operations Manager Jim Johansen thinks students like Perrine are a positive asset to the Bureau. Johansen said, "Heath is a high caliber, self-starting individual who effectively balances school and work and brings plenty of energy."

During his STEP experience, Perrine has worked on a variety of maintenance and construction projects and gained valuable design skills in the engineering software program AutoCAD, experience not available in a classroom.

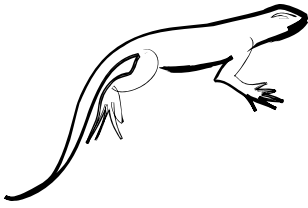
Daylon Dubkowski, BLM Boise District Supervisory Civil Engineer finds that students such as Perrine bring a special perspective to the Bureau, especially in the area of technology. "These employees are new to the job market and work hard to make a good impression." Dubkowski began his BLM career as a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) student 11 years ago.

In announcing the establishment of the Departmental Office of Youth in Natural Resources last summer, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said, "President Obama and I believe that during tough economic times, a new national youth program is needed to provide jobs, outdoor experiences and career opportunities for young people."

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**Bonneville Point gazebo
and informational kiosks**





Native species such as the Tiger Dunes Beetles and the Long-nosed Leopard Lizard to benefit from targeted grazing project.

Targeted Grazing Project to Restore Natural Dune Function and Habitat for Native Species

The Burley Field Office is testing the efficacy of targeted grazing on sand dunes to restore natural dune function and habitat for native species such as the Tiger Dunes Beetles and the Long-nosed Leopard Lizard.

This study will occur north of Lake Walcott in several allotments including Walcott, Schodde and Lake Channel. Historically, small active dunes occurred throughout the project area until the majority of the dunes were stabilized with crested wheatgrass.

Discovery of dune beetles in the area led to a conservation initiative to cease seeding dunes, however no restoration efforts have occurred to date. Grazing

operators will cooperate with this effort by strategically placing salt blocks/protein tubs on seeded dunes. BLM will compare the effect cattle have at treatment sites to control sites.

Although anecdotal evidence suggests that concentrated grazing does destabilize dunes and create occupied beetle habitat, adult beetles were found during pre-treatment monitoring among crested wheatgrass stabilized dunes.

This study will include monitoring of effects on beetles as well as the vegetation to determine both whether dunes can be restored and whether such measures are even necessary.



Long-Nosed Leopard Lizard

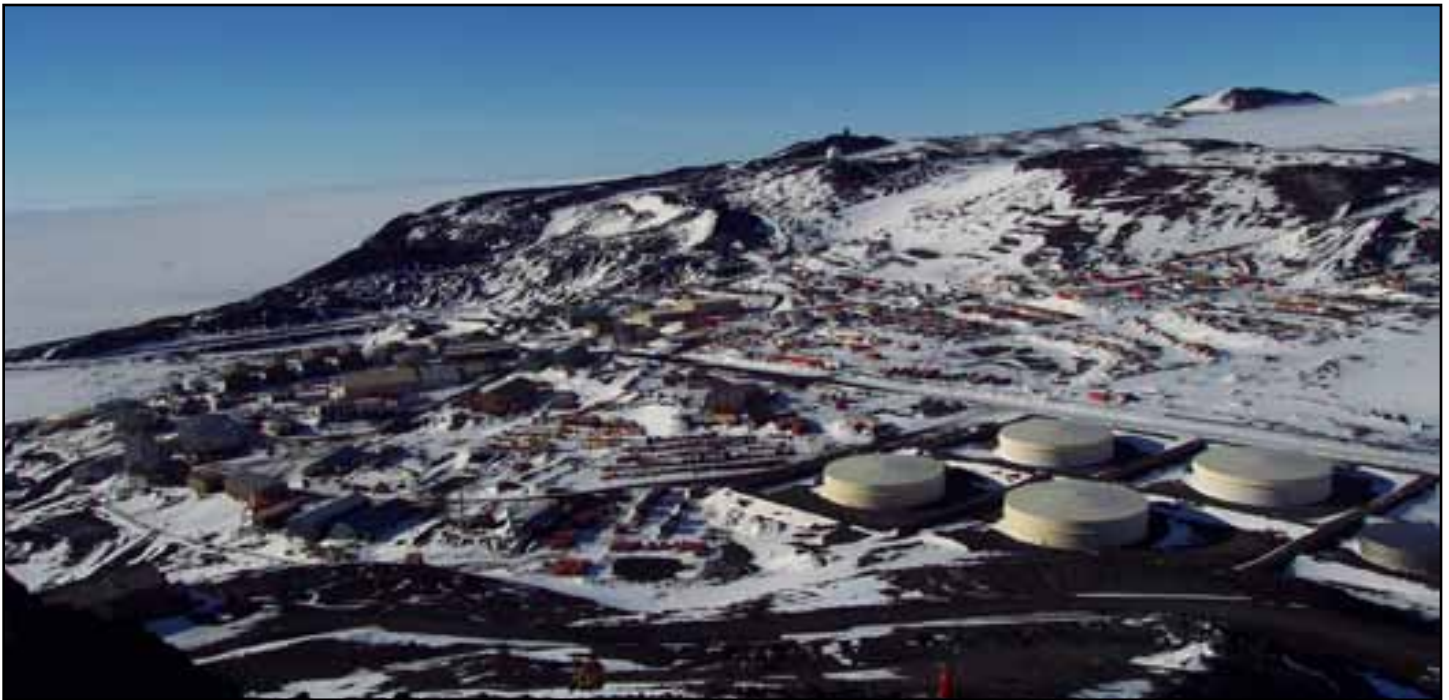
F.I.R.E Up Student Spotlight: Life at the McMurdo Research Station

Joshua Williams, a former *Field Inquiry Research Experience (F.I.R.E Up)* student, recently spent time working in Antarctica's largest modern-day science center, McMurdo Station. While at McMurdo Station, Williams worked for Raytheon, a company contracted by the National Science Foundation to run all of science support at the American bases - McMurdo, Palmer and South Pole. Raytheon runs all of the fueling operations on base and gets fuel to the power plant, to vehicles, to buildings for heat and to the helo pad and skiway/ runway. Williams spent most of his days in the lab, testing fuel to ensure that it was fit for use in an aircraft.

Joshua found that the skills he aquired during the *F.I.R.E. Up* program proved to be beneficial and valuable background for this position. "My time in *F.I.R.E Up* greatly helped prepare me for this line of work. My daily job was incredibly detailed and time-consuming and required that I make observations and turn them into usable data, much like the work I completed in the *F.I.R.E Up* program," Williams said.

F.I.R.E Up is a three-week summer course for high school students designed to help them learn about wildfire behavior, its effect on ecosystems, and minimizing rural communities' susceptibility to fire. To prepare for field research, students are taught how to gather quality data and master the use of tools and techniques.

Williams is scheduled to graduate from College of Idaho in 2012 and hopes to return to Antarctica in time for the 2012-2013 season.



F.I.R.E. Up is a three-week summer course for high school students designed to help them learn about wildfire behavior, its effect on ecosystems, and minimizing rural communities' susceptibility to fire. For more Information on this program, please visit the website.





Winners of the 2010 Ice Derby

participating kids.

The 2010 local sponsors included: Salmon-Challis National Forest; Salmon Region - Idaho Department of Fish & Game; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; BLM Salmon and Challis field offices; National Marine Fisheries Service; Bureau of Reclamation; and Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program-Lemhi Soil and Water Conservation District.

19th Annual Kid's Ice Fishing Derby Event Gets More Kids in the Woods

I got a bite. I caught another fish. This fish is huge, I can't wait to see how much it weighs! Those were some of the sounds you heard throughout the morning of the 2010 Kid's Ice Fishing Derby held south of Salmon, ID on January 30.

The main goal of this successful and popular partnership project was to get "More Kids in the Woods." In all, 109 kids (ages 1 to 16 years old) showed up to participate in the event with more than 40 supportive parents and grandparents. Participants came from all over Lemhi County and as far away as Challis and Mackay.

In preparation for the arrival of the young fishermen, the Idaho Fish and Game stocked the local Hyde Creek Pond with 300 rainbow trout.

The young anglers and adults were in good spirits in spite of temperatures below freezing. All the kids seemed to be

enjoying their ice-fishing adventure. When taking a break from fishing, popular gathering areas included the hot chocolate station, the warming fire and the sledding hill.



Salmon-Challis National Forest Fishery Biologist Dan Garcia enjoys being a part of the event each year. "The ice fishing derby is a popular and rewarding event that the community looks forward to every winter. It has been popular for so long that we now have parents that participated in this event when they were in grade school who are now bringing their own children to it. Some kids experience their first catch at this event."

Fish and Game donated rod/reel combos to each of the four big fish winners and local sponsors donated over \$2,000 in prizes available to each one of the



Ice Derby Participant

Programs Help Students Gain Experience/Careers in BLM

By: Jessica Gardetto, Public Affairs

Tricia Miller enjoys her job. For the past year, Tricia has been working as a Fisheries Biologist in the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Tricia works for the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Salmon Field Office in Salmon, Idaho while she attends the University of Idaho via online classes; she is working towards her certificate in Restoration Ecology. She speaks fondly about her position as a SCEP student and her pleasant voice describes what she does for work as enjoyable.

"My work experience has helped me in school," Tricia says. "I am more of a hands-on learner, so this position has really helped me both with school and in gaining valuable experience in my field of work," she adds.

As BLM employees, SCEP students work while attending school in offices throughout the nation. Under the program, they have an established support system of mentors and supervisors who guide them through the program. Students work in the BLM positions that most closely match their academic majors, which vary from natural resources and information technology to recreation and law enforcement.

Idaho BLM currently employs 12 SCEP students throughout its four districts and the State Office. The Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP) also provides 102 Idaho students with career experience while attending college. The major difference between the two programs lies

in the fact that STEP students are considered to be temporary employees and employment ends once they graduate, while SCEP students can be non-competitively placed in a permanent position upon graduation.

While she was working for the Salmon Field Office as a seasonal fisheries technician, Tricia was selected for a SCEP position and gladly took the opportunity to continue her education towards becoming a Fisheries Biologist. As Tricia works towards her Restoration Ecology certificate, she may even end up getting her masters in Natural Resources if needed to fulfill the requirements for her to become a full-fledged Fisheries Biologist.

On an average field season day, Tricia may be songbird banding, supervising youth, monitoring range allotments, or riding a horse into remote country to assess stream health for local fish species. In the winter months, she's inputting data and working on NEPA documents, but her favorite aspect of her position involves stream monitoring.

"It's really interesting, because I get to deploy thermographs, which monitor the temperature of individual streams. By examining the data from the thermographs, we can tell whether the streams are at the right temperature for the healthy migration, spawning or rearing of anadromous fish," Tricia explains. "I'm actually helping to maintain the health of our streams, and that's important," she adds.

Shanin Van Buskirk is also a SCEP student located in Burley, Idaho. She's currently working as a Range Clerk for the Burley Field Office, and hopes to become a career-employee through the SCEP program. While attending the College of Southern Idaho to obtain her degree in business, Shanin works in the field office in range monitoring programs and performs administrative duties.

"I would encourage anyone who has an interest in working as a professional for the BLM to become part of the SCEP program," says Shanin. "The SCEP has opened a lot of doors for me, and I'm grateful."



Miller enjoys fieldwork for BLM

Grant Simmonds (left) honors Joe O'Neill (right) with Resource Management Agency Award



BLM Employee Receives Resource Management Award

BLM Cottonwood Outdoor Recreation Planner Joseph O'Neill was honored with the 2009 Resource Management Agency Award by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA).

O'Neill was recognized by the IOGA for his contribution to enhance communications, understanding and cooperation with individual outfitters and the Idaho outfitting and guiding industry. The award was presented during the noon luncheon at the annual IOGA meeting held in Boise, ID.

O'Neill said, "I was pleasantly surprised to receive this award. It is definitely an honor to be recognized by the outfitting industry with whom we work so closely with."

Since 1988, the IOGA annually recognizes a state or federal resource management agency employee who exemplifies communication, trust and building positive relationships with the outfitting and guiding industry

through their work as a resource manager. According to Grant Simmonds, Executive Director for the IOGA, "Our industry is heavily regulated by both the state and federal government. It is imperative that we consistently work on building positive relationships."

Simonds noted that O'Neill was selected as the 2009 recipient for his efforts to create great working relationships with the Special Recreation Permit holders. During the awards ceremony, Simonds referenced an incident on the Lower Salmon River where O'Neill was instrumental in helping a local outfitter.

According to Jerry Hughes of Hughes River Expeditions, one of their guides had a medical emergency and needed to be evacuated from the river.

The guides called Hughes using a satellite phone and requested a Life Flight evacuation but, due to a powerful thunderstorm, such an evacuation was not possible so Jerry Hughes called Joe O'Neill for assistance.

Hughes stated, "My wife and I called Joe at home that evening and were amazed at how quickly he was able to arrange a jetboat to meet us. We met Joe and an Idaho Fish and Game jetboat operator on the river at dawn. At that time I replaced my injured guide and continued down river with the float trip while Joe accompanied the injured guide and my wife back to the launch site where they met the ambulance and EMTs (that Joe arranged). Joe stayed with them until our guide was in the Syringa Hospital at Grangeville."

Hughes expressed his appreciation for the extra efforts that O'Neill took in this situation, "Our injured guide needed medical assistance and Joe went well out of his way in this situation. We appreciate everything he did and the cheerful, helpful demeanor he displayed throughout the event."



BLM river patrol boats routinely meet with boating public and clean up beaches

National Award Presented to Local Wildlife Educator For “Excellence in Interpretation and Education”

For the second consecutive year, a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) nominee in the Coeur d’Alene District has received a Gold Award for “Excellence in Interpretation or Environmental Education.” The 2009 Gold Award recipient, Wildlife Education Specialist Elizabeth “Beth” Paragamian, was recently recognized for her outstanding wildlife education programs delivered across large areas of Idaho and eastern Washington, in both classroom and outdoor settings.

Paragamian traveled to Hartford, Connecticut to accept the Gold Award during the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) workshop in November 2009. The BLM “Excellence” nominees were judged on the quality of their work, ability to involve partners, effectiveness in enhancing public understanding of cultural and natural resources, programs’ or products’ accessibility and sensitivity to diverse audiences while helping the BLM accomplish management goals.

In presenting the awards, the BLM Director Bob Abbey stated, “The BLM’s interpretive and educational programs help to increase public appreciation and support of our multiple-use mandate and our management efforts. Public understanding of the balanced uses of numerous and diverse resources is critical to the success of the BLM’s mission.” Each winner was recognized for their exceptional work with partners and communities to create meaningful

interpretive and/or educational experiences and materials for public land users.

According to Gary Cooper, BLM’s Coeur d’Alene District Manager, “Beth fills a unique position funded by three agencies in Coeur d’Alene: the BLM, Idaho Panhandle Forest and Idaho Fish and Game.” He added, “Beth is a key component of northern Idaho’s interagency Watchable Wildlife Program; a model program that delivers exceptional interpretive and educational services, helping to ensure public investment in the protection and preservation of the area’s wildlife and other natural resources.” Most recently, the region’s Watchable Wildlife Program has included programs and activities funded through BLM’s “Take It Outside! Connect With Your Public Lands” initiative.

“This prestigious award recognizes Beth’s dedication to providing quality wildlife education programs to over 125,000 people annually. Her accomplishments in 2009 highlight her individual efforts involving area schools, businesses, state and federal agencies, community groups and numerous organizations,” continued Cooper.

Samples of wildlife education programs, events and products that Beth was involved with during 2009 include:

- Recipient of BLM’s *Take it Outside* Grants for public programs involving an Osprey Cruise, Owl Hoot Program and youth-oriented Eagle Watching Cruise.
- Work with youth at the Wildlife Nature Center located at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds; involving Junior and Senior

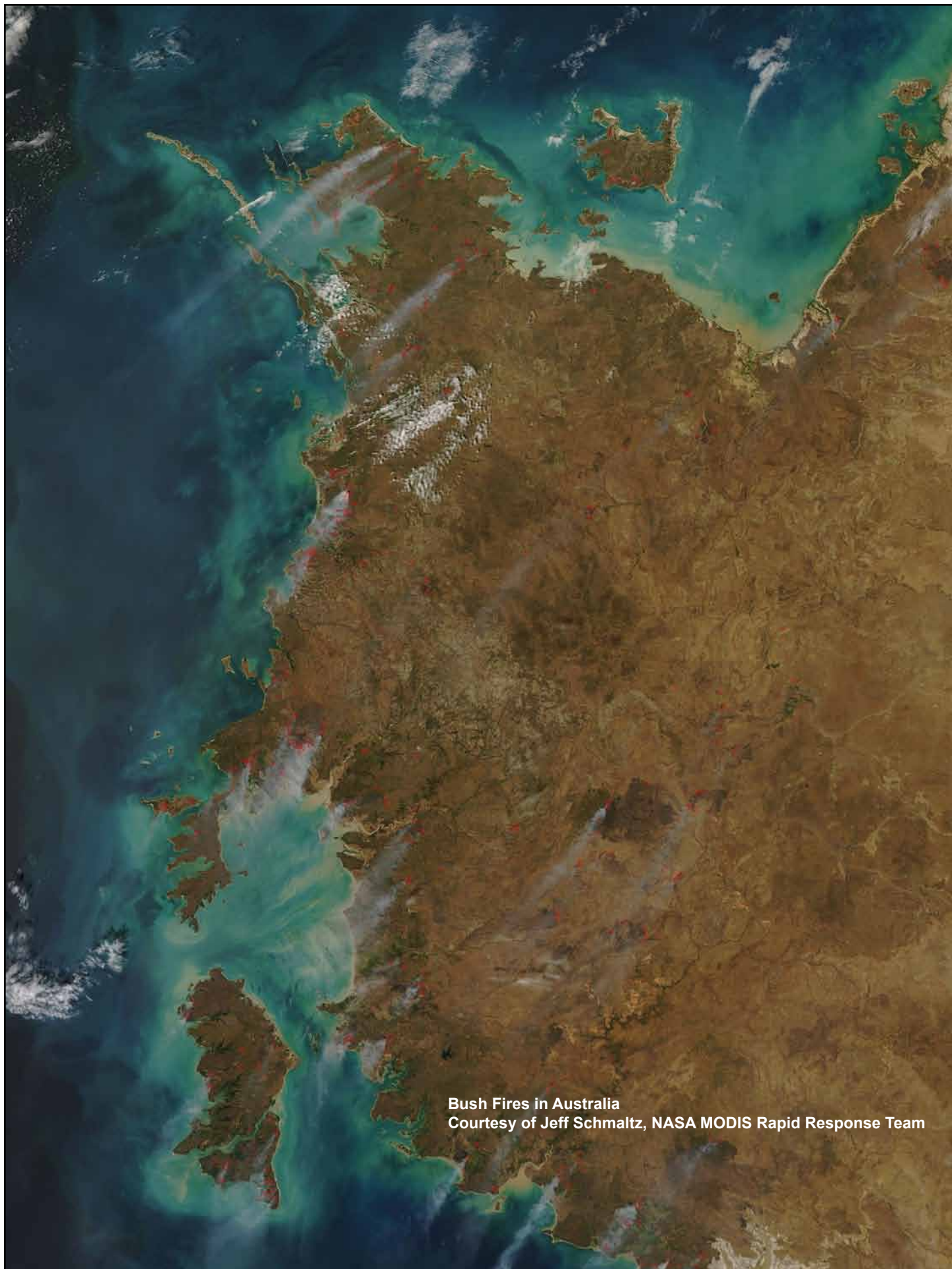
High School volunteers who help feed and care for injured wildlife.

- Work with and mentoring of local teenager to develop Junior Ranger Program, emphasizing youth involvement in outdoor activities (to begin in 2010).
- Owls of Idaho program during Earth Day Events in Coeur d’Alene and Sandpoint.
- *Go Wild in Your Back Yard* programs for adults and youth; constructing nest boxes, learning about seeds and plants to benefit wildlife.
- Development and distribution of new signs and posters: Owls of Idaho, Life Cycle of the Kokanee Salmon and Life Cycle of the Bald Eagle.
- Presentations during the North Idaho Fair at the Wildlife Nature Center.

After receiving the award, Paragamian commented, “I was very surprised to receive the award from the BLM. It was also very inspiring to hear about the other nominees who were recognized for their environmental education programs. It is a team effort to provide educational programs and opportunities to the public.”



Photo Above: BLM Director Bob Abbey presents the Gold Award to Paragamian



Bush Fires in Australia
Courtesy of Jeff Schmaltz, NASA MODIS Rapid Response Team

Idaho Falls District Fuels Specialist Assists in Australian Fire Season

Throughout several intense fire seasons, the United States, Australia and New Zealand have built a critical international collaborative effort to exchange resources.

The year 2000 marked unprecedented fire behavior throughout the United States. With almost 100,000 fires consuming 2.8 million acres, BLM firefighters were in need of assistance. To fill this need, twenty firefighters from Mexico along with an additional 96 Fire Management Specialists from Australia and New Zealand stepped in to help.

In 2009, Victoria, Australia was subjected to an unparalleled fire season. On February 7, 2009, "Black Saturday," 400 individual fires were recorded, 1.1 millions acres were burned and the season resulted in 173

civilians' death, 414 injuries and thousands of destroyed structures.

Following the 2009 fires, the *Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission* was established to investigate the causes and responses to the devastating bushfires in Victoria.

As a result of the *Royal Commission's* investigation, the *State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment* recognized the need to increase capacity in key Incident Management positions.

Given the previously developed relationship between Australia and the United States, two groups of incident management specialists were chosen to visit Australia to help the country develop and retool some of their current fire suppression techniques.

Jeff Gardetto, Idaho Falls District BLM Fire Use Specialist, was

selected out of 400 applicants to spend five weeks working with Australia's fuel, aviation and fire suppression programs.

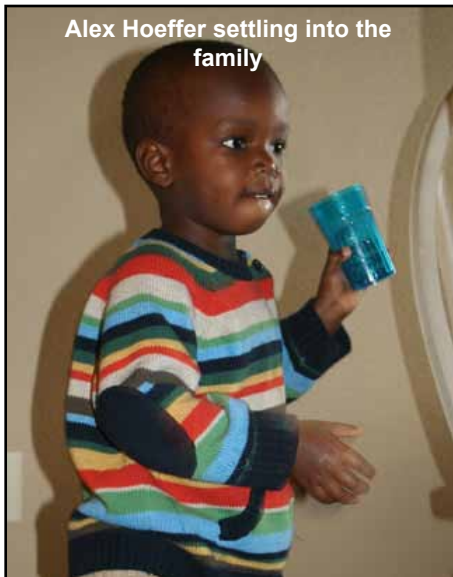
A major component of Gardetto's responsibilities was to help set up safe heli-base operations for helicopter fueling in the Otways and to evaluate the effectiveness of the DC-10 aircraft (used for fire suppression).

Gardetto said Australia's aviation program is very similar to that of the United States. "Australia regulates the aviation program, safety, aviation resource deployment and overall aviation management like the United States," Gardetto said.

Gardetto enjoyed his experience in Australia. "It was a wonderful experience to help bring ideas and different techniques to our partners overseas...We also developed ideas that can enhance our fire and fuels program here in the states," Gardetto explained.



Throughout several intense fire seasons, the United States, Australia and New Zealand have built a critical international collaborative effort to exchange resources.



Alex Hoeffler settling into the family

BLM Fisheries Biologist and Family Adopt Son from Haiti

By: Scott Hoeffler, Fisheries Biologist

After many months of waiting, BLM State Office Fisheries Biologist Scott Hoeffler and his wife finally got the call they had been hoping for.

The story begins in the spring of 2007 when Hoeffler and his wife Abby decided to adopt internationally. They researched international adoption and a variety of countries before settling on an orphanage in Haiti called "God's Littlest Angels." At this time, they were told that the adoption process in Haiti would take 18 months.

The waiting game had begun. We received a referral for Alex in June 2008, and were thrilled. He was 19 months old at the time. Although we had not met Alex, we felt an immediate connection with him, and our love for him grew with each monthly update. The Haitian government began taking longer and longer to process adoptions, but every once in a while we would get a glimmer of hope by moving on to the next stage in the Haitian government's

process.

In the fall of 2009, we were informed that a new Haitian law had been instituted requiring adoptive parents to travel to Haiti and appear before the civil court to essentially prove that you were who you were claiming to be. At the time, it was discouraging because we felt that it was just another hoop to jump through that would further lengthen the process. We traveled to Haiti in early November 2009, and were changed by what we experienced. It is impossible to explain the poverty and chaos that we observed in Haiti. Abby and I felt an immediate connection with the country and the people there, but the best part was being able to meet Alex face-to-face and spend time with him. It was grueling to return home without him, particularly, since we had no idea how much longer the process would take.

On January 12, 2010, when the earthquake struck, our world was turned upside down. Fortunately,

the orphanage reported that everyone was safe. We had no idea what this meant for the adoption process considering that all of the paperwork was likely buried under a pile of rubble that was once a government building. Rumors started flying as everybody began speculating on what would happen. We grew very excited about the prospect of bringing Alex home soon.

The U.S. eventually granted humanitarian parole visas to adoptees to enter the U.S. to join their families and we were informed that all adoptive parents needed to be in Miami to pick up their children. We arrived in Miami on January 21 and were finally united with Alex.

The past weeks with Alex have been amazing. He is fitting right in with our family, and is bonding very well with us.

Many thanks to Scott for sharing his story and congratulations on your family's new addition!



The Hoeffler Family

Welcome New BLM Employees

Terry Humphrey ***Four Rivers Field Manager***

Humphrey was most recently the Assistant Field Manager of the Taos Field Office in New Mexico. In this position, he was responsible for the cultural, range, realty, wildlife, forestry, and minerals programs.

During Terry's educational and staff experience in the recreation and planning fields, he has worked with the BLM, National Park Service and the Forest Service in Alaska, Utah, California, Idaho, Oregon and New Mexico.

Terry and his wife Birgitta will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary this year, as well as their daughter's graduation from Hawaii Pacific University in May. Terry and Birgitta enjoy many outdoor activities, including: hiking; trail running; mountain biking; whitewater rafting; and telemark, downhill, and cross country skiing.



Tricia Roller-Burkhardt ***Morley Nelson Birds of Prey*** ***NCA Manager***

Roller-Burkhardt has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Biology and a Masters Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries. She began her career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a Botanist in the Ecological Services Branch in Arizona and later went on to work as a Fire Use Specialist for Idaho Falls BLM working to improve sage grouse habitat.

During the last seven years, she has worked as a Fuels Lead for the USFWS/Refuges and BLM providing oversight, guidance and review for the planning and implementation efforts for vegetation management for natural resource improvement.

She is excited to explore all of Idaho's outdoor opportunities with her husband Glen and their four dogs.

Glen Burkhardt ***State Fuels Lead***

Glen started his federal career in 1989 in Arizona chasing Spotted Owls and helping out on a fire crew. He then worked on a hotshot crew for several seasons until he got the chance to work a season in southeast Alaska.

In 1996, he landed a career seasonal position and became involved in prescribed fire, fuels reduction and suppression work.

He moved to Idaho in time for the National Fire Plan kickoff and got involved in fuels management full-time. He later worked in mitigation and education at the Arizona State Office and as the Wyoming state fuels specialist. Burkhardt was hooked on the Great Basins' diversity and its associated issues and pursued the chance to get back to Idaho.

Glen enjoys being outdoors and spending time with family.



Bruce Ogonowski
State Office Cadastral Section
Chief

Recently transferring from Alaska BLM, Ogonowski has worked in land surveying in Alaska since 1979.

As a Cadastral Surveyor with the Bureau of Land Management, he has served as a Lead Special Instruction Writer/Reviewer in the Branch of Survey Planning and Preparation, Project Inspector for contracted surveys, Supervisory Land Surveyor in the Branch of Field Surveys, Land Surveyor in the Branch of Survey Preparation and Contracts and Branch of Field Surveys, and GCDB Branch Chief.

He is an Alaska Registered Professional Land Surveyor, and earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Land Surveying at Michigan Technological University.

His love of the outdoors has led to a lifelong interest in hunting, fishing and training his Labrador retrievers.



Mike Browne
Hazmat and Abandoned Mine
Lands Lead

Browne brings a wealth of experience from his work with the BLM, Forest Service and National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). He has diverse project experience and has demonstrated successful program leadership and management.

Formally with the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Mike served as the On-Scene-Coordinator for a large Superfund site - Beal Mountain Mine Reclamation Project. Prior to joining the Forest Service, Mike was with the BLM in Montana for 16 years.

Browne has a Master's Degree in Soil Science, a Graduate Certificate in Hazardous Materials Management and a Bachelors Degree in Agronomy and Fish & Wildlife Management.

In his free time, Mike likes to spend time with his family and ski, fish, hunt and woodwork.



Kirk Halford
State Archaeologist and Paleo
Program Lead

Halford comes to the Idaho State Office from California BLM Bishop Field Office where he managed a progressive cultural resource program and developed great working relations with the local Tribes and other partners.

He is the national lead for the Cultural Resource Data Sharing program and has taken on various statewide assignments which included serving as acting State Cultural Resource Program Lead for California.

Kirk will represent Idaho on the BLM's Preservation Board.

When's he not at the office, his spare time is spent doing family activities, such as camping, hiking, backpacking, skiing and fishing. He also enjoys coaching soccer and hockey.



Jonathan Norred
Geospatial Information Systems Specialist

Norred has over 12 years of experience in digital imaging, aerial photography, data collection, and information systems. He holds degrees in Geography and Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) from Portland State University, and was initially trained as an aerial reconnaissance photographer for the Navy. Norred has since applied his knowledge, experience, and education to the geospatial industry, focusing his efforts in areas of land use, natural resources, and municipal infrastructure.

Jon enjoys hunting, fishing, climbing, biking, hiking and kayaking. He also greatly enjoys the small metropolitan style of downtown Boise and is an avid guitarist, with minor ukulele skills from a few years spent in Hawaii. When not otherwise engaged, Jon can usually be found working on what will likely be a lifelong restoration of his 1930s era home which he shares with his wife Amy, and their aging dachshund Miss Ginger.

Rod Collins
Supervisory Geographic Sciences Specialist

Collins has over 12 years of experience in digital mapping, data collection, GIS integration, project management, system management, and information systems. He holds a degree in Computer Aided Design with a Minor in GIS from Boise State University, and is a certified GIS Professional. Rod's first introduction and reliance on maps was in the Army as an Aerial Observer, better known as a helicopter co-pilot, in which he flew scout aircrafts. After serving his country for six years on active duty Rod returned to Idaho to begin his education. Rod went on to work at the City of Nampa as the GIS Manager for the last eleven years. When Rod and his wife Robin are not running between games and practices for basket ball, baseball, soccer, softball, karate, and cheerleading, with their six kids, they enjoy spending some down time together working in the yard, gardening, reading and playing with their two dogs.



Codie Martin
Statewide Rangeland Management Specialist

Martin will serve as the Range program lead dealing with grazing administration and litigation issues, as well as overall program management and budget. Codie will also have the Wild Horse & Burro program and work closely with Idaho's Wild Horse & Burro Team to deal with statewide activities. Codie most recently worked in the Shoshone Field Office where he was an integral part of managing their successful range program for almost 10 years. He has hands-on experience with all aspects of rangeland management that will serve the BLM well as he becomes a valuable resource for specialists and managers. Codie had demonstrated leadership qualities and aspirations at the field level and this past year completed the Leadership Idaho Agriculture program as one of BLM's first participants. He has a Bachelor Degree in Rangeland Ecology from the University of Idaho.

Jenna Gaston
Energy Archaeologist

Gaston is well-acquainted with Idaho and its cultural resources. She worked for the Idaho Department of Transportation for 23 years as the Cultural Resource Manager. She actually initiated the cultural resource program during her time at the Transportation Department.

Most recently she has worked in Portland, Oregon for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and as a project manager for the I-5 Highway Columbia River Crossing Project, a joint effort between the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation.

In her free time, Jenna enjoys applying her skills as an archaeologist as she digs in her garden and treasure hunts at yard sales. She also loves to cook, hike, cross county ski, flyfish and play board games.



Bob Firpo
Solicitor Attorney/Advisor to BLM

Firpo joined the Department of the Interior Solicitor's Office in September of 2009. He will focus his time on issues relevant to the BLM, including the development of thorough resource management plans and NEPA documents. Bob will also assist in all aspects of BLM-related litigation, particularly grazing and planning litigation.

Bob joins the Solicitor's Office from the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, where he served as a law clerk to a Ninth Circuit Judge in Boise, Idaho. Before that, Bob served as a law clerk for judges on the United States District Court for the Southern District of California and the Montana Supreme Court.

He graduated from UC Hastings College of the Law in 2005, and did his undergraduate work at UCLA. When he's not working, Bob enjoys fly-fishing, backpacking, and UCLA basketball.



Dominika "Nika" Lepak
Range Management Specialist - Ecology & Monitoring

Nika came to the BLM State Office from the Bruneau Field Office where she was an ecologist. She has also been a rangeland management specialist in the Owyhee Field Office and the Bakersfield District in California. Her academic background has focused on rangeland resources and plant ecology.

Lepak has a Masters degree from New Mexico State University and a Bachelor of Science degree from Oregon State University.

She will be a great asset in providing guidance and technical support across the state dealing with land health assessments, monitoring, and integrated program issues affecting Idaho's rangeland resources.

Anne Corcoran Briggs
Solicitor Attorney/Advisor to
BLM

Corcoran has worked for BLM since April 2009 and specializes in planning, NEPA, real estate, mining and CERCLA issues.

Briggs moved to the Solicitor's Office from private practice in Oregon, where she served as land use hearings officer, governmental mediator and municipal attorney. Prior to that, she was appointed to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, a statewide tribunal charged with reviewing appeals of local land use decisions. Before her appointment to the Land Use Board of Appeals, Anne worked as county counsel and/or planning director for two rural Oregon counties.

Anne graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law in 1991 with an emphasis in Natural Resources Law.



Jeff Foss
Deputy State Director
Resource Services

Foss began his career in the field of natural resource management in 1980 working for the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service after earning his Bachelor of Science degree in rangeland resource management from the University of Idaho. He later attended a Forest Service sponsored training that led to him earning his Masters of Science degree from Michigan State University in 1985.

Jeff has served in a variety of ranger districts, the supervisor's office, and regional office positions with the Forest Service in Utah, Idaho, and Alaska: district range conservationist, land management planner, natural resource information planner, EIS team leader, regional NEPA coordinator, regional planning specialist, and LMP team leader.

In 2002, he began his position with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Boise and through March 2010 served as State Supervisor for the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office responsible for conservation of plants, wildlife, and resident fish listed under the Endangered Species Act.

During a 5-year period in the late 90s, Jeff even taught adult education evening classes at Boise State University focused on supervision, communication and teamwork.

According to Jeff, "I chose a career in natural resource management because of my connection with the land. I grew up in rural Northwest Ohio amidst farms and industry and public land was scarce. I remember the joy I

experienced in hunting, trapping and fishing as a teenager, so I saved up money from mowing lawns to buy a small aluminum boat to fish the Sandusky River. I remember the warnings in the early 1970s about mercury in Lake Erie perch and the Cuyahoga River catching fire. I knew early on that I wanted to be part of natural resource management. Ultimately, I pursued college in the west and have been in the west since 1977. I enjoy the challenges of natural resource management and believe our mission is vital to this generation and those that follow. I look forward to joining the BLM and the Resource Services Team!"

Foss has been married to his wife Carol since their junior years at the University of Idaho. Carol teaches chemistry at Timberline High School. Jeff and Carol are "empty-nesters" with three grown and married children who live in Boise, Reno and Minnesota. They enjoy activities centered around camping (dutch oven cooking), fishing, hiking, rafting and biking.

